

# THE ABRSM MUSIC THEORY SYLLABUS FROM 2020: GRADES 1 TO 5

## Grade 1

- 1 Note values of semibreve, minim, crotchet, quaver and semiquaver, and their equivalent rests (candidates may use the terms 'whole note', 'half note', etc.). Tied notes. Single-dotted notes.
- 2 Simple time signatures of  $\frac{2}{4}$   $\frac{3}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$ , bar-lines and the grouping of the notes listed above within these times.
- 3 The staff. Treble (G) and bass (F) clefs. Names of notes on the staff, including middle C in both clefs. Sharp, flat and natural signs, and their cancellation.
- 4 Construction of the major scale, including the position of the tones and semitones. Scales and key signatures of the major keys of C, G, D and F in both clefs, with their tonic triads (root position), degrees (number only), and intervals above the tonic (by number only).
- 5 Some frequently used terms and signs concerning tempo, dynamics, performance directions and articulation marks. Simple questions will be asked about a melody written in either treble or bass clef.

## Grade 2 *As in Grade 1, with the addition of:*

- 1 Simple time signatures of  $\frac{2}{2}$   $\frac{3}{2}$   $\frac{4}{2}$  and the grouping of notes and rests within these times. Triplets, and triplet note groups with rests.
- 2 Extension of the staff to include two ledger lines below and above each staff.
- 3 Relative major and minor keys. Construction of the minor scale (harmonic only). Scales and key signatures of the major keys of A, B $\flat$  and E $\flat$ , and the minor keys of A, E and D, with their tonic triads (root position), degrees (number only), and intervals above the tonic (by number only).
- 4 More terms and signs in common use.

## Grade 3 *As in preceding grades, with the addition of:*

- 1 Compound time signatures of  $\frac{6}{8}$   $\frac{9}{8}$   $\frac{12}{8}$  and the grouping of notes and rests within these times. The demisemiquaver (32nd note) and its equivalent rest.
- 2 Extension of the staff beyond two ledger lines. Transposition at the octave from the treble clef to the bass clef, and vice versa.
- 3 Scales and key signatures of all major and minor keys up to and including four sharps and flats, including both harmonic and melodic forms of minor scales, with their tonic triads (root position), degrees (number only), and intervals above the tonic (number and type).
- 4 More terms and signs.

## Grade 4 *As in preceding grades, with the addition of:*

- 1 All simple and compound duple, triple and quadruple time signatures, and the grouping of notes and rests within these times. The breve and its equivalent rest. Double-dotted notes and rests. Duplets.

- 2 Alto clef (C clef centred on 3rd line). Notes in the alto clef in any of the keys set for this grade (see below). Notes of the same pitch written in different clefs (treble, alto, bass) and transposition at the octave from the treble or the bass clef to the alto clef, and vice versa. Double sharp and double flat signs, and their cancellation. Enharmonic equivalents.
- 3 Scales and key signatures of all major and minor keys up to and including five sharps and flats, with both forms of minor scales. Technical names for the notes of the diatonic scale (tonic, supertonic, etc.). Construction of the chromatic scale. All intervals, not exceeding an octave, between any two diatonic notes in any of the keys set for this grade.
- 4 Triads (root position) on the tonic, subdominant and dominant notes in any of the keys set for this grade. Chords in root position on the tonic, subdominant and dominant notes in any of the keys set for this grade (the harmonic form of the scale will be used in minor keys).
- 5 More terms and signs, including the recognition and naming of the trill, turn, upper and lower mordent, acciaccatura and appoggiatura. Questions about a passage of music will include simple related questions about standard orchestral instruments.

## Grade 5 *As in preceding grades, with the addition of:*

- 1 Irregular time signatures of  $\frac{5}{4}$   $\frac{7}{4}$   $\frac{5}{8}$   $\frac{7}{8}$  and the grouping of notes and rests within these times. Irregular divisions of simple time values.
- 2 Tenor clef (C clef centred on 4th line). The identification of notes in the four clefs in any of the keys set for this grade (see below), and the transposition at the octave of a simple melody from any clef to another. Transposition to concert pitch of a short melody notated for an instrument in B $\flat$ , A or F, and vice versa (the interval of transposition up or down will be given).
- 3 Scales and key signatures of all major and minor keys up to and including six sharps and flats. All simple and compound intervals from any note.
- 4 The root position (a), 1st inversion (b) and 2nd inversion (c) forms of the tonic, supertonic, subdominant and dominant chords in any of the keys set for this grade. The choice of suitable chords at cadential points of a simple melody in the major key of C, G, D or F. Perfect, plagal and imperfect cadences in the major keys of C, G, D or F.
- 5 More terms and signs. The recognition of ornaments, including the replacement of written-out ornamentation with the appropriate signs, but not vice versa. Questions on the types of voice and names of instruments, the clefs they use, instrument family groups and the basic way by which they produce sound, as well as points of general musical observation designed to test the candidate's ability to apply theoretical knowledge to actual music.